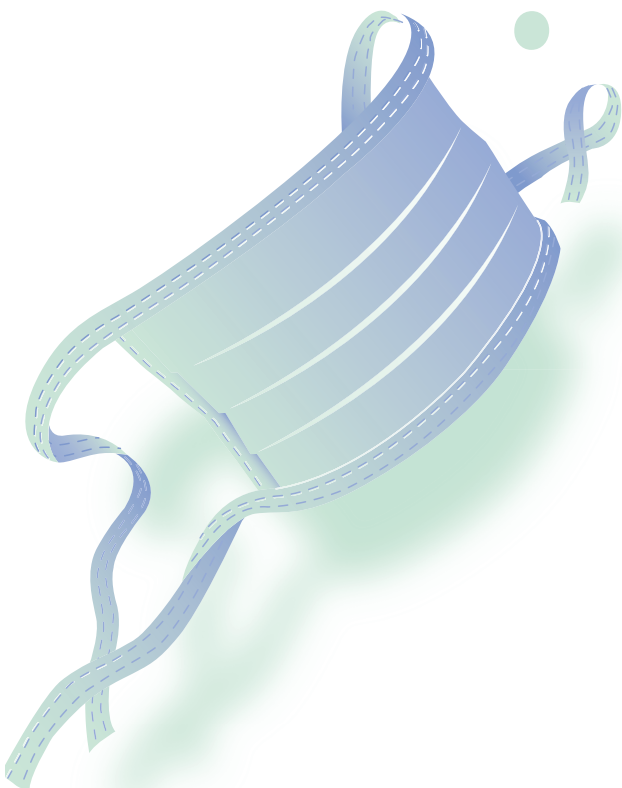


Did you  
**ask**  
about  
**masks?**



**D**uring periods of increased respiratory infection in a community—such as influenza outbreaks—use of face masks may help to reduce the spread of disease. Face masks are especially recommended for people who have flu-like symptoms, but healthy people may also want to consider wearing a mask as one way to avoid getting sick.





## So, when to wear a mask?

**It's a good idea to wear a mask when you are seeking medical treatment for flu-like symptoms.**

Let the receptionist or nurse know right away if you have flu-like symptoms such as cough, fever, difficulty breathing and muscle aches. You may be asked to wear a mask to avoid infecting others. If you already have a mask, put it on before you go out in public with flu-like symptoms.

**Consider wearing a mask when others around you are sick.**

If you are in close contact with or a designated caregiver of someone who is sick, wearing a mask may reduce your chance of becoming ill. It is even more important that the person who is sick wears a mask!

**Masks may be especially helpful if there is an outbreak of flu in your community.**

During periods of increased respiratory infection in the community such as a flu outbreak, masks may help reduce transmission of the infection from one person to another.

## Where can you get a mask?

Masks are sold in pharmacies, medical supply stores or through the Internet.

Remember: mask use—all by itself—can't prevent flu. But it will help stop the spread of germs if mask use is combined with good hygiene:

- Wash your hands often to help prevent illness. **ALWAYS** wash your hands immediately after you take off a mask. Use soap and water, if possible, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you are not near a sink.
- Don't handle your mask and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Change your mask whenever it gets moist. Never wear a mask for longer than one day.



## Keep your germs to yourself when you are not wearing a mask!

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw out the tissue in the nearest wastebasket and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm—not your hands.



For more information, visit

[www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) *or*  
[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)



State of New York  
Department of Health